



## HITECH PRIORITY GRANTS PROGRAM

### *Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program*

#### *Facts-At-A-Glance*

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- Section 3011 of the HITECH Act authorizes immediate funding to strengthen the health information infrastructure in the United States.
- Under that authority, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology (ONC) has announced the availability of \$235 million in funding for the **Beacon Community Program**.
- The Beacon Community Cooperative Agreement Program will establish \$220 million in cooperative agreements with communities to build and strengthen their health IT infrastructure and health information exchange capabilities to achieve measurable improvements in health care quality, safety, efficiency, and population health.
- An additional \$15 million will provide for technical assistance to the communities and to evaluate the success of the program.
- The grant program will seek to advance a health information technology infrastructure that will support the nationwide electronic exchange and use of health information in a secure, private, and accurate manner.
- Communities funded through the Beacon Community Program will be expected to build on an existing infrastructure of interoperable health IT and standards-based information exchange to advance specific health improvement goals declared by each community.
- Beacon Communities will be required to coordinate with the Regional Extension Center Program and State Health Information Exchange Program, including the Health Information Technology Research Center (HITRC), to develop and disseminate best practices for adoption and meaningful use of electronic health records and to facilitate national goals for widespread use of health IT.
- Beacon Communities are expected to maximize their efforts by leveraging other existing federal programs and resources that are working to promote health information exchange at the community level, including:
  - Department of Defense and the Department of Veterans Affairs development of a Virtual Lifetime Electronic Health Record (VLER) for all active duty, Guard and Reserve, retired military personnel, and eligible separated Veterans.
  - Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) programs at federally qualified health centers (FQHCs) and the Health Center Controlled Networks (HCCNs) for the adoption of certified electronic health records and exchange of health information.
  - Department of Agriculture and Department of Commerce efforts to extend broadband infrastructure.

- Approximately 15 cooperative agreements will be awarded to qualified non-profit organizations or government entities representing a variety of health settings and populations, including rural and underserved communities and other vulnerable populations.
- The Beacon Community may represent a consortium of stakeholder organizations and health care providers. The lead applicant must be a U.S.-based, non-profit organization or a government entity falling into one of the following five categories:
  - 1) State, local, tribal, or territorial government entity with a public health focus
  - 2) Integrated delivery network or health system with broad community partnerships
  - 3) Independent physician association or consortium of medical groups
  - 4) Public/Private partnership aimed at health system improvement and/or community health improvement
  - 5) ONC-funded regional extension center with the capacity to expand its services
- Applications are due on February 1, 2010. Award decisions for the Beacon Communities are anticipated in March 2010 and programs will last for a 36-month period.

Additional information is available at <http://HealthIT.HHS.Gov/HITECHgrants>.